



Managing Demand

"Safeguarding the Peer Review Process"

Stuart Ward

Director Corporate Services

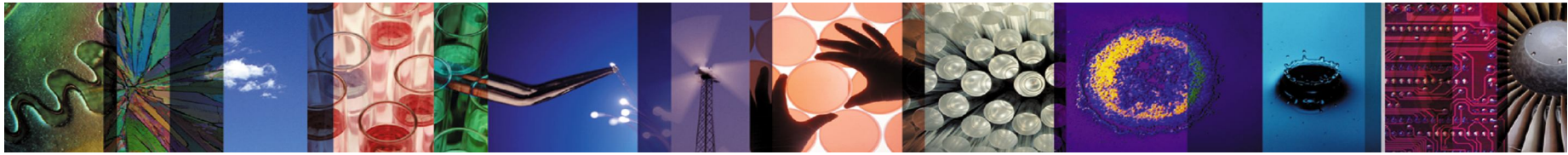
Engineering and Physical Sciences Research Council





Organisational Structure

Department for Business, Innovation & Skills						
BIS Science and Innovation Group						
Research Councils UK						
AHRC	BBSRC	EPSRC	ESRC	MRC	NERC	STFC
Council Chairman: Mr John Armitt						
Chief Executive: Professor David Delpy						
Business Innovation Directorate: Catherine Coates	Communications & Information Directorate: Atti Emecz		Corporate Services Directorate: Stuart Ward		Research Base Directorate: Lesley Thompson	

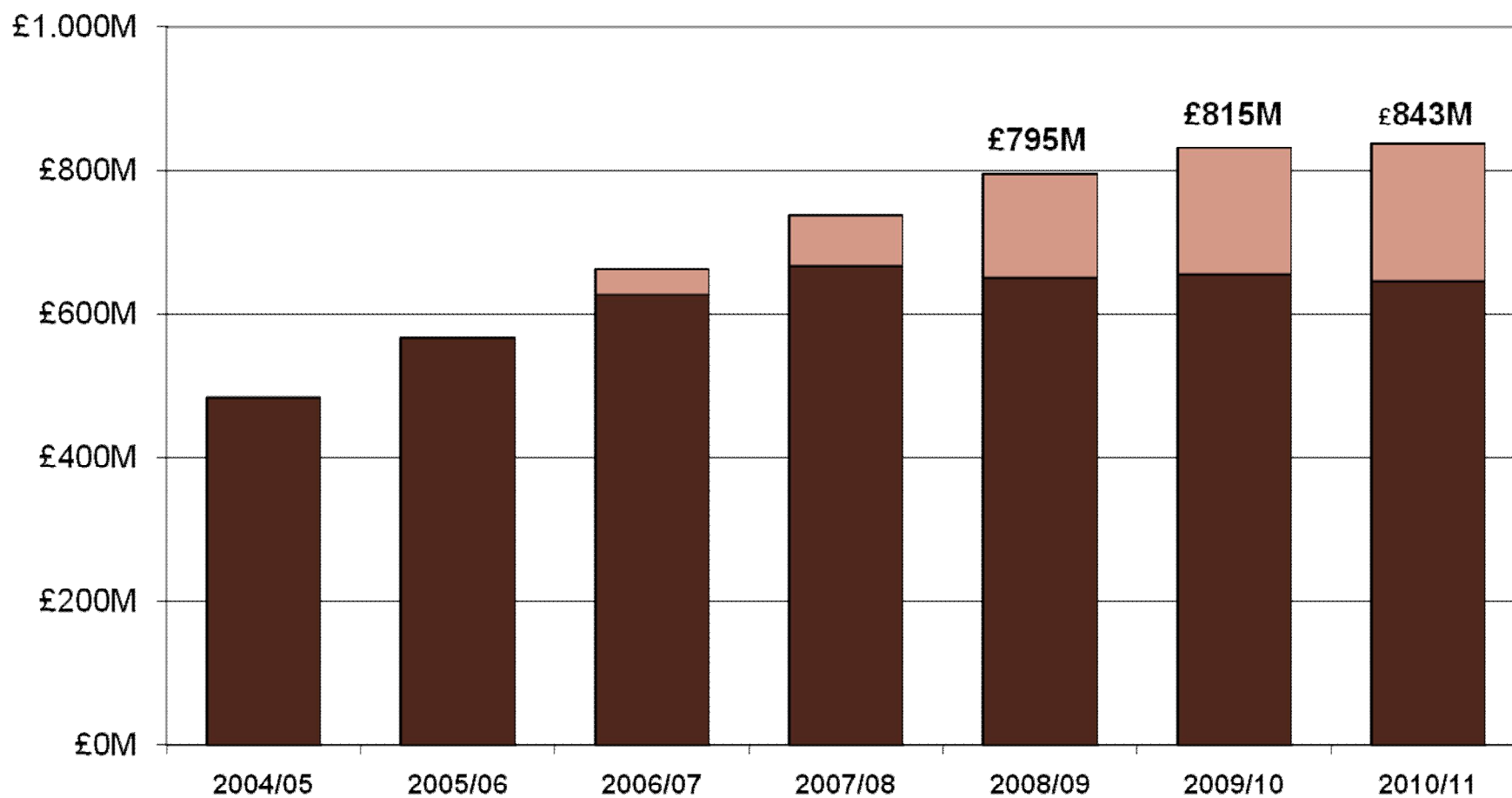


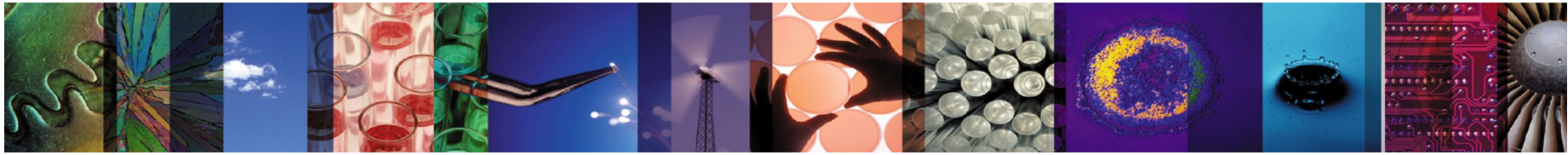
Engineering and Physical Sciences Research Council

- ❖ The main UK government agency for funding research and training in engineering and the physical sciences
- ❖ We invest around £800 million (€940m) a year so that the UK will be prepared for the next generation of technological change



EPSRC Expenditure 2004/05 - 2010/11





- Historically an “open-door” policy to all proposals....
-but strong feedback from the community on declining success rates
- Prudent to act now to underpin efficiency of the process
- ...and reduce burden of peer review on stakeholders

Grants on the Web - Avant Browser

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http://gow.epsrc.ac.uk/ViewPanel.aspx?PanelId=4730

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Grants on the Web

EPSRC
Pioneering research and skills

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GoW Search go

Panel Name: Physics Prioritisation Panel Meeting
Date of Panel: 30 January 2009
Panel Contact: Mr Jonathan Williams

In exceptional circumstances, panel membership may change at a late stage. Such changes may not be reflected in the membership below. The research organisations listed are current and are not necessarily those that the panel member was affiliated with at the time of the panel.
 Under no circumstances should the panel members be contacted to discuss meeting details or outcomes.
 All enquiries must be directed to the EPSRC panel contact.

Panel Members:

Professor M Padgett	University of Glasgow	Panel Chairperson
Professor S Bose	University College London	
Professor JT Costello	Dublin City University	
Dr S Crampin	University of Bath	
Professor PAJ de Groot	University of Southampton	
Professor R Golestanian	University of Sheffield	
Professor P Littlewood	University of Cambridge	
Professor AJ Turberfield	University of Oxford	
Mr Jonathan Williams	Engineering and Physical Sciences Research Council	Panel Contact

Outcomes Summary By Number

Funding rates may change over time until all decisions are finalised

Funding Priority List	Announced	Unfunded	Referred to a later panel	Decision still awaited	Funding rate (% of grant number)
First Grants	3	4	0	0	42
Responsive Mode	4	21	0	0	16
Signpost	1	0	0	0	100
Physics/LSI Signpost	1	2	0	0	33
Summary:	9	27	0	0	25

Please click on relevant Funding Priority List for a full rank ordered list.

Outcomes Summary By Value (£)

Funding rates may change over time until all decisions are finalised

Funding Priority List	Announced	Unfunded	Referred to a later panel	Decision still awaited	Funding rate (% of grant value)
First Grants	658,491	1,643,107	0	0	29

1 100% Internet

Rank Ordered List Panel - Avant Browser

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Google Search

Rank Ordered List Panel

Panel Name: Physics Prioritisation Panel Meeting
Date of Panel: 30 January 2009
Panel Contact: Mr Jonathan Williams

Panel Rank Ordered List: Responsive Mode

Rank	Grant Reference	Principal Investigator	Holding Organisation	Grant Title	Value (£)
1.	EP/G043396/1	Dr JA Purton	STFC - Laboratories	The CCP5 Network: The Computer Simulation of Condensed Phases 2009-2012	130,377
2.	EP/G056781/1	Dr SA Gardiner	Durham University	Relative Phase and Coherence in Bright Matter-Wave Solitons	374,037
3.	EP/G04239X/1	Professor ADR Phelps	University of Strathclyde	Instabilities in non-thermal plasmas	1,053,628
3.	EP/G042500/1	Professor RA Cairns	University of St Andrews	Instabilities in non-thermal plasmas	354,519
5.	EP/G04578X/1			Not Funded	
6.	EP/G035911/1			Not Funded	
7.	EP/G060444/1			Not Funded	
7.	EP/G060533/1			Not Funded	
9.	EP/G035822/1			Not Funded	
9.	EP/G035873/1			Not Funded	
9.	EP/G036519/1			Not Funded	
12.	EP/G044333/1			Not Funded	
13.	EP/G03270X/1			Not Funded	
13.	EP/G033218/1			Not Funded	
15.	EP/G035091/1			Not Funded	
16.	EP/G056277/1			Not Funded	
17.	EP/G038392/1			Not Funded	
17.	EP/G038937/1			Not Funded	
19.	EP/G055130/1			Not Funded	
19.	EP/G055238/1			Not Funded	
19.	EP/G055262/1			Not Funded	
19.	EP/G055327/1			Not Funded	
23.	EP/G043000/1			Not Funded	
23.	EP/G043280/1			Not Funded	
25.	EP/G053243/1			Not Funded	

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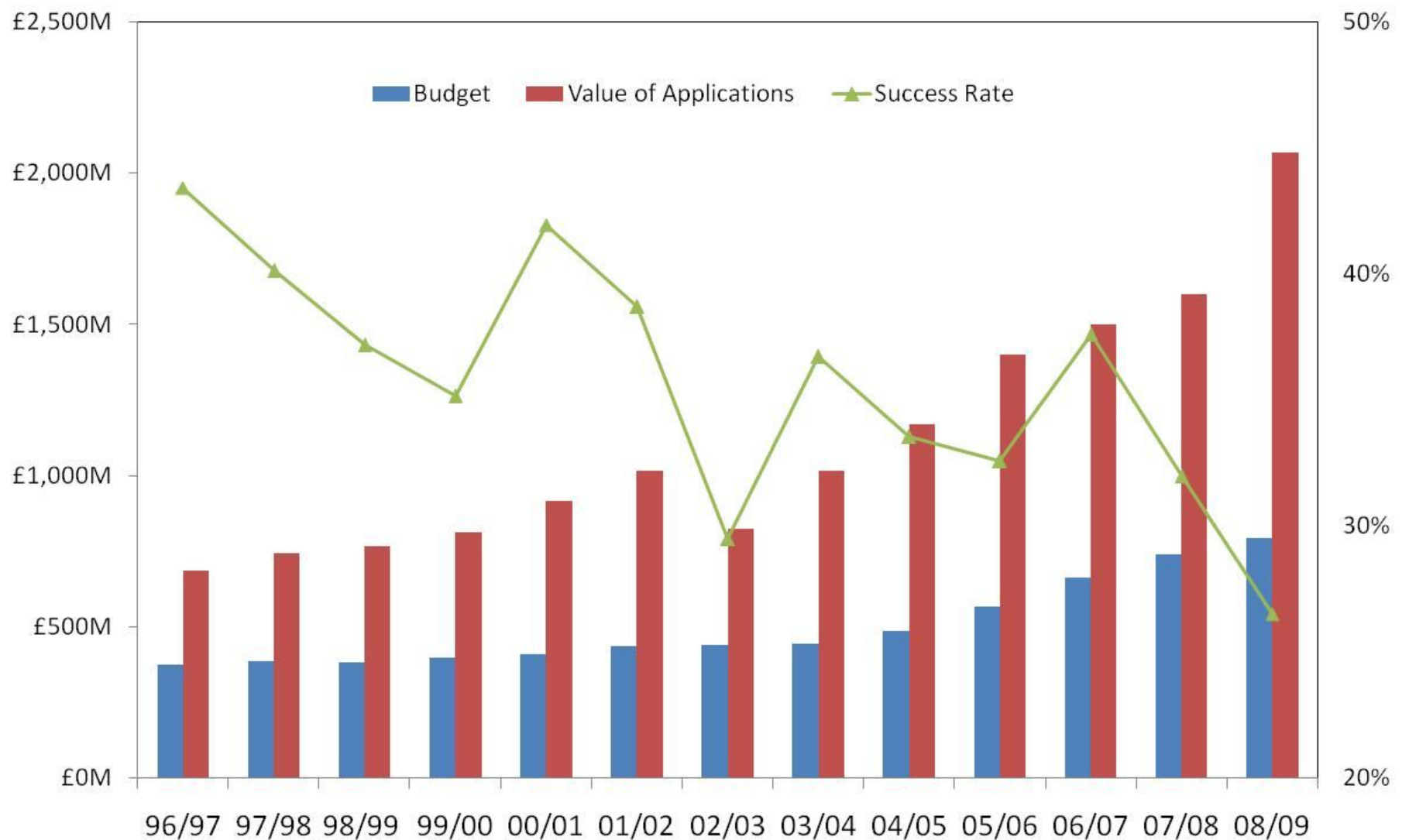
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Notes:

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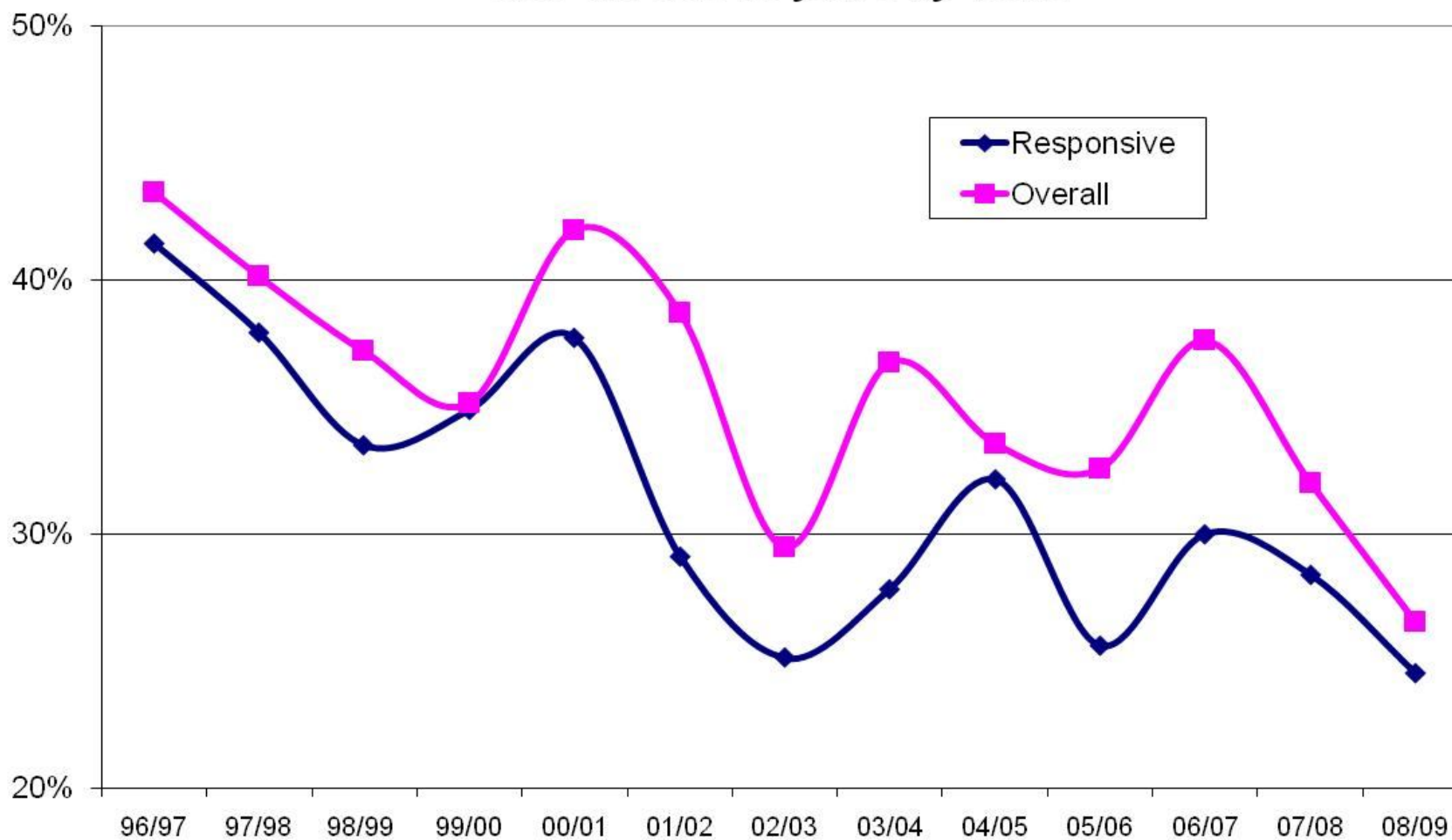


Trend in grant values since 1996/7 compared to success rates



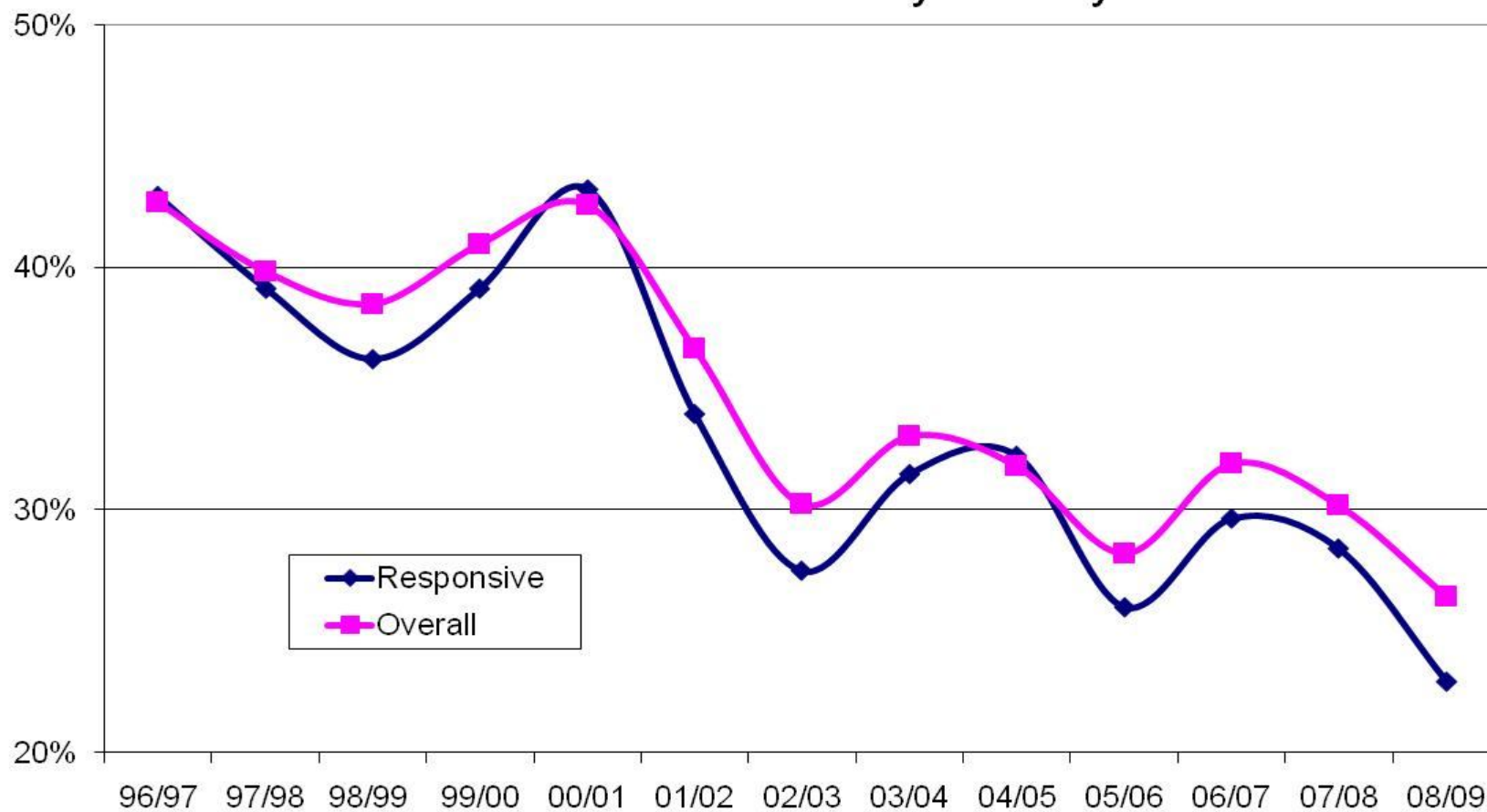


**Responsive Mode and Overall Funding Rates
over the last 10 years by Value**



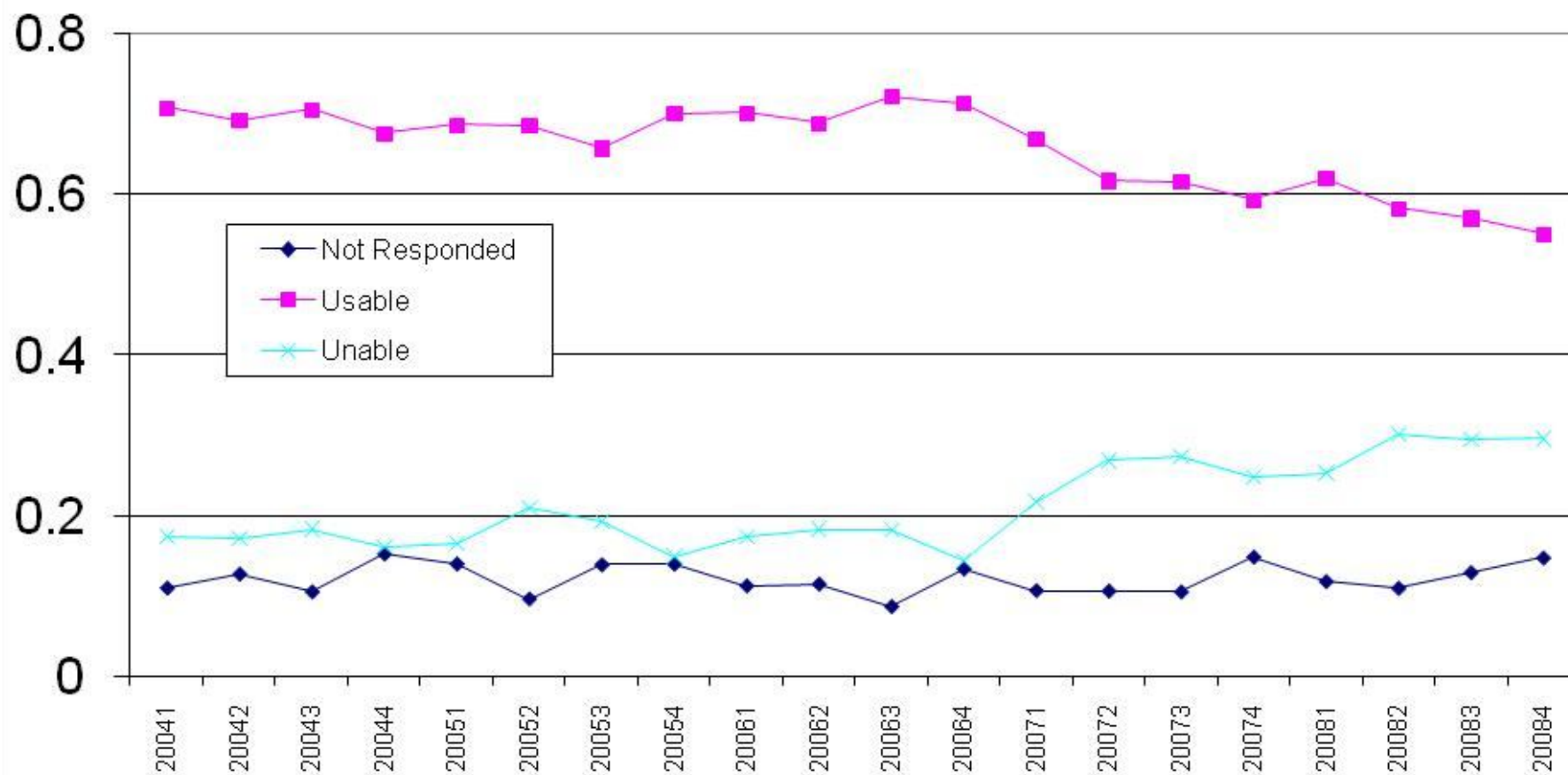


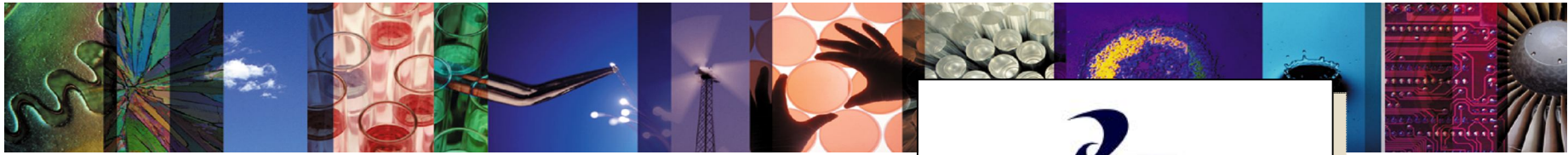
Responsive Mode and Overall Funding Rates over the last 10 years by Number



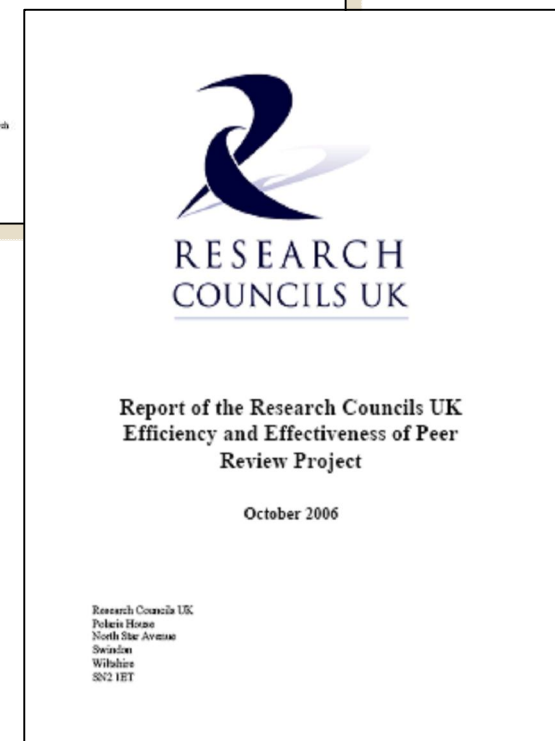


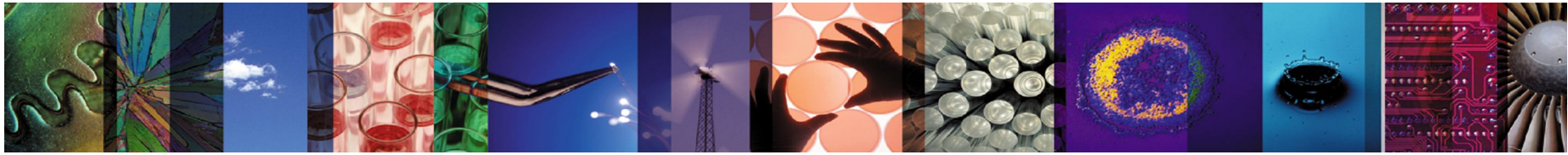
**Reviewer Response types by quarter between
01/01/04 and 31/03/09**





- 2006 RCUK Review into Effectiveness of Peer Review
- Number of proposals to Research Councils has doubled since 1988/89
- Review process becomes ineffective when success Rates <10%





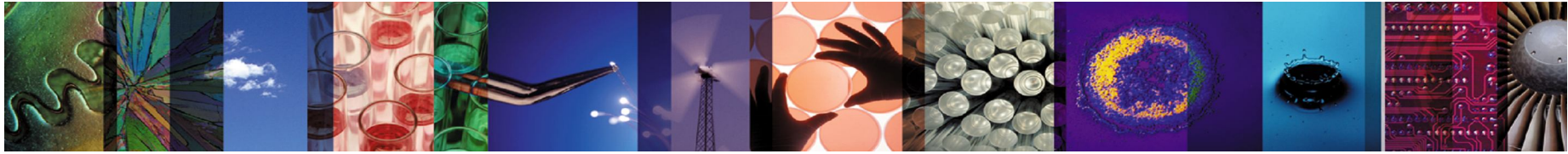
Key Facts

- Budget reduction of 5% in real terms following Spending Review
- Growth in value of applications well above inflation
- Council success rate at 28% overall and 22% in responsive mode and falling
- Proposal demand consistently above 5000 proposals per annum
- ...whilst the best possible case will be made to Government the next settlement is likely to be even tighter...



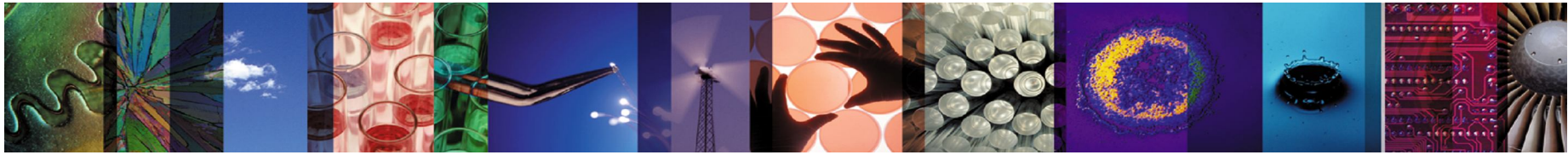
Issues and Challenges

- Currently 2% of proposals are declared resubmissions – but internal estimate is closer to 20%
- Many are just recycled through the review process
- A small number of applicants make multiple submissions and are repeatedly unsuccessful
 - 206 applicants accounted for 1033 unsuccessful proposals in the last two years



What are the aims of safeguarding peer review?

- The focus is to:
 - remove the lowest quality proposals from the peer review system
 - constrain repeatedly unsuccessful applicants
- Measures will be implemented over the next 12 months commencing April 2010
- Looking to make a substantive reduction (approx 30%) in applications



Options For Change

Four options have been are being introduced:

- No resubmissions
- Pausing repeatedly unsuccessful applicants for a twelve month period
- Providing best practice and guidance to institutions
- Enhancing transparency over review outcomes

Council dismissed three other options:

- Institutional Quotas
- Proposal Charging
- Increased use of Outlines



What's Changing? – Resubmissions

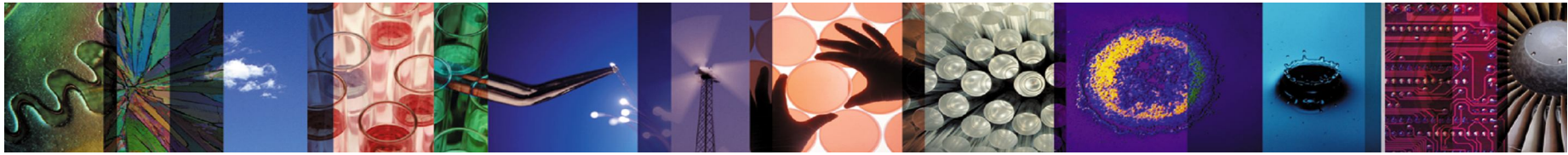
- From 1st April 2009, we no longer accept resubmitted proposals
- Resubmissions may on occasion be invited by EPSRC, based on advice from peer review
- Financial deferrals to the following peer review panel meeting for those proposals just below the funding cut-off



What's Changing?

- Repeatedly Unsuccessful Applicants

- From 1st April 2010 applicants who meet the criteria will be limited to one application only (as PI or Co-I) during the 12-month “cooling off period”.
- Applicants in this group will have made a high number of applications and have low personal success rates
- Universities will offer mentoring or other support during this period



Criteria

- Within any 2 year period any PI that :
 - Has at least 3 proposals ranked in the bottom half of a Rank Ordered List or that do not make panel
 - AND has a personal success rate of less than 25%
- Success rate will be calculated by number of proposals submitted not value



What's Changing?

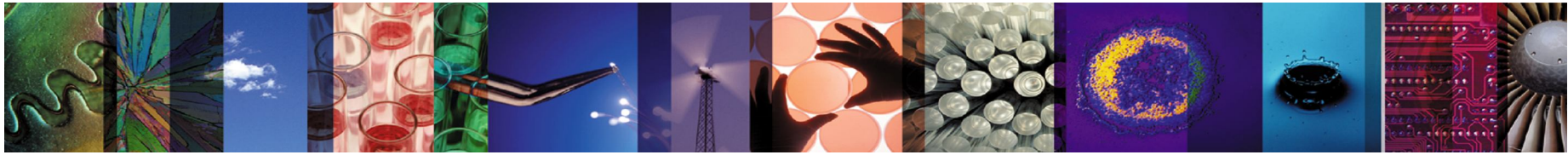
– Repeatedly Unsuccessful Applicants

Now

- We will identify and promote best practice across the sector
- We will work in partnership with institutions to identify “at-risk” cases

From 1st April 2010

- Individuals who satisfy the criteria (and those one away) will be notified in writing
- We will ask an institution to appoint a mentor or take appropriate action such as review submission strategies
- During the 12-month period only one further application (as PI or Co-I) will be considered
- We will update institutions on a monthly basis



Best Practice / Greater Transparency of Outcomes

- Study days at universities regionally or in Swindon to reinforce peer review training
- EPSRC will develop regular reports to universities to help manage submissions:
 - Institutional and departmental breakdowns
 - Sift rates, numbers of submissions etc...
- Applicants will be able to access data concerning their own personal success rate



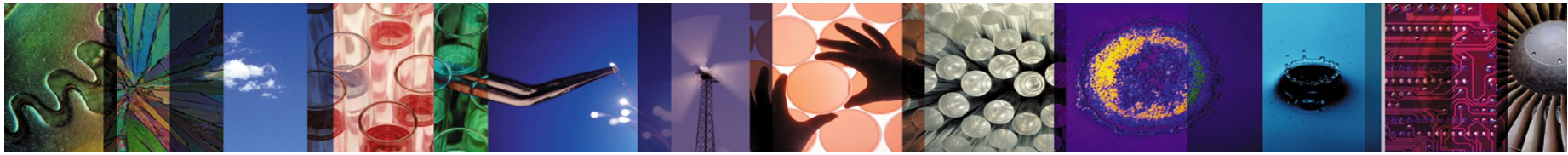
Comment in the Community

- “Want some more depressing news? Consider [EPSRC's new policy](#).”
- “EPSRC have now changed the regulations so that researchers with a less than 25% rate on their applications get banned for applying for more funding for a year”
- “Almost everyone would be blacklisted, no? It's most certainly a "rich get richer" types scheme”
- “My only consolation is that it means that university departments will have to stop their relentless pressure on us to keep applying for lots of grants.....”
- “.....Fewer applications but higher quality will have to be the name of the game.”



The Primary Benefits

- A reduced burden of effort spent on assessing poor quality applications by the peer review community
- More time and effort available to peer reviewers to spend on the consideration of high quality proposals
- Increased efficiency of the current peer review process by a reduction in submission of uncompetitive applications
- Better quality research through fewer, more considered proposals
- Increased scope to focus on communicating new opportunities rather than reactive communication about success rates



In Summary

We have:

- developed measures based on the advice we have received
- acted in response to community concerns and reduce some of the burden associated with the review process...



More information...?

- Further details available on the EPSRC website at <http://www.epsrc.ac.uk/ResearchFunding/Changes/ReducingPressure.htm>
- Outcomes and proposal rank ordering (panel information): <http://gow.epsrc.ac.uk/>



Peer Review Process

